



*AMJA Declaration Regarding Ruling on
Attending Jumu'ah and Congregational Prayers
and on Opening the Masjids if Authorities Allow
it During the Coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic*

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Q. What is the ruling on attending Jumu'ah and congregational prayers and, for the masjid management, the ruling on opening the masjids to accommodate, to full capacity, those who desire to attend Jumu'ah and congregational prayers, if the authorities allow it, during the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic?

A. In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful


All praise belongs to Allah, and may prayers and peace be upon Allah's Messenger, his family, his Companions, and those that followed.

First, there is no doubt that the vast majority of medical professionals and specialists have been warning that this virus is not going to cease, that the danger of its spread is still very much present with a high likelihood of a second wave of infections, and that it is still too early for things to return to how they were. However, on the other side of the balance, the economy must be reopened quickly, because it is an absolute necessity to support society. This concern has prompted many of the states to begin to relax the stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders and to incrementally allow economic activity to resume, while considering the ramifications of this opening and its effect on the spread of the virus and the possible results of that.

There is no doubt that this is a difficult balance, and taking both views into account informs our current issue and the scope of the Islamic ruling.

Second, the Fatwa Committee reiterates its absolute position of preserving the intent of the Legislator, including exalting and establishing the rites of Allah from one angle and safeguarding human life, not jeopardizing it, from another. Likewise, it reiterates that its juristic position revolves around official mandates and advice from official health organizations. Accordingly, our response to this matter has two relevant issues: one, that which concerns the general Muslim population, and two, that which concerns the masjid's management.

Third, the general Muslim population is afforded a concession to be absent from Jumu'ah and congregational prayers and instead to pray Dhuhr on Friday and the other five daily prayers in their homes, out of fear of spreading the virus. This is based on the advice of experts, specialists, and medical professionals at this current time.



As for those whose aspirations have reached the level of hastening to attend Jumu'ah and congregational prayer in order to join the ranks of those who utilize the houses of Allah and glorify His rites within them, we hope they are included with those whose aspirations are to rush to righteousness on the condition that they take the necessary medical precautions, beginning with ensuring that they are not already infected with the virus and have none of its symptoms, wearing a protective face mask, performing sujood on their own personal prayer rug, and keeping a distance of six feet between themselves and others the entire time, along with whatever other public health instructions are circulating from trusted and official sources. The gatherings for prayer must also be permitted by the relevant authorities.

As for those who do not want to do so (i.e., to attend congregational and Jumu'ah prayers while the pandemic is still a known threat), we hope that they are included in the concession, because these issues are based on the majority and most people around the country are still prohibited from attending these rituals.

Fourth, the masjid caretakers should permit those who wish to pray there to do so, while ensuring that the size of the congregation does not exceed the maximum number permitted at this time by the relevant officials. It is also permitted for the management of the masjids to use their own reasoning to determine the size of the gathering they are able to manage, in order to take the necessary precautions and follow the instructions from experts.

If the masjid management is unable to apply these guidelines that guarantee the safety of the worshipers and the community, either due to a lack of financial capacity to do so or an inability to enforce them on the attendees, it is permitted for them to keep the masjid closed to the public, allowing only what is enough to establish the rites, until they are able to apply the guidelines effectively.

We appeal to whoever has been charged by Allah with the management of the masjids to do whatever is in their capacity to allow the Muslims to perform what Allah has obliged them to do while protecting their safety. We ask Allah to remove this virus and bring good from it.

And Allah the Exalted is Most High and All-Knowing.

